

AURELIO AND MIRANDA:

A D R A M A.

IN FIVE ACTS.

WITH MUSIC.

FIRST ACTED AT THE THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY-LANE,
ON SATURDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1798.

WRITTEN BY

JAMES BOADEN.

Che non puo far d'un cor, c'habbia foggetto,
Questo crudele e traditor' Amore?
Poi ch'ad ORLANDO puo levar del petto
La tanta Fe, che deve al suo Signore!
Gia savio, e pieno fu d'ogni rispetto,
E de la SANTA CHIESA diffensore;
Or, per un vano Amor, poco del zio,
E di se poco, e men cura di Dio.

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AUGUST 1901

A. J. H. H. H.

IN RIVER

WITH M. J. H.

FIRST ACTING AT THE THEATRE FOR THE FIRST TIME
ON SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1901

THEATRE

JAMES H. H. H.

The first act of the play was a success. The audience was large and the performance was well received. The first act was a success. The audience was large and the performance was well received. The first act was a success. The audience was large and the performance was well received.



THEATRE

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS Play is avowedly founded on the Romance of the MONK. The Author enters not into the discussion which that work has produced. His attempt has been to dramatise the leading incident of the Romance, without recourse to supernatural agency. Happy shall he feel, if what he has done be thought not to discredit a production, of which the interest has never been exceeded. For difference of opinion he is fully prepared:—but the generous approbation of the AUTHOR OF THE ROMANCE might console him under any objections from the uncandid;—those of Genius and Judgment it is becoming to bear with fortitude and respect.

To the acting of Mr. KEMBLE the Author has so great obligation, that it would be a treason against excellence not to leave his sense of it upon record. He has many acknowledgments to make to his OTHER FRIENDS, for doing much, where he knows himself to have done less.

THE CHARACTERS.

Aurelio	-	Mr. KEMBLE.
Raymond	-	Mr. BARRYMORE.
Lorenzo	-	Mr. C. KEMBLE.
Christoval	-	Mr. BANNISTER, Jun.
Zingaro	-	Mr. ARCHER.
Hilario	-	Mr. MADDOCKS.
Bonaventure	-	Mr. SPARKS.
Pedro	-	Mr. WEWITZER.
Juan	-	Mr. WENTWORTH.
Claude	-	Mr. WEBB.
Lopez	-	Mr. EVANS.
Servant	-	Mr. RYDER.
Miranda (Eugenio)	-	Mrs. SIDDONS.
Agnes	-	Mrs. POWELL.
St. Agatha	-	Miss TIDSWELL.
Teresa	-	Miss WENTWORTH.
Zingarella	-	Mrs. BLAND.
Antonia	-	Miss HEARD.
Leonella	-	Mrs. SPARKS.

Monks, Nuns, Gypsies, Soldiers, &c.

SCENE—MADRID.

AURELIO AND MIRANDA.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Cathedral Church of Madrid.*
A number of persons going out from the service.

LORENZO and CHRISTOVAL *come forward.*

Lorenzo.

WELL, Christoval, you see your sister Miranda is not in the church.

Chris. No; but I am, and that's equally strange. I have told you of her sudden manner of quitting home?

Lor. Yes, and it is no slight instance of the ardor with which that sex pursues its object, whatever it be.

Chris. She was upon a visit at the Countess Oso-
rio's seat, when she first heard this Aurelio preach;
and the last intelligence I had of her was, that
B since

since her return to Madrid she was here morning, noon, and night, whenever there was a chance of hearing him.

Lor. I must confess, I half excuse Miranda. In spite of the lovely object who sat opposite, there were times when his eloquence drew me so irresistibly, that beauty could only divide the hour with him.

Chris. He awes me by his manner, I think—the severity of his eye, the loftiness of his carriage, the authority of his voice.

Lor. Nay, let us do him justice. His piety is unaffectedly grand, and his learning profound; and his command over the passions instantaneous and absolute.

Chris. I only wish the truant Miranda was here to complete this eulogium. My life on't, she would discover the grace and beauty of his person, which you have omitted—the more striking to women, as, from his order, they can cherish no hope. O, nothing is so precious to a female as what's unattainable. But who are these?

Lor. Ha! why the young one is the sweetest creature in the universe; the very enchantress that bewitched me just now. I'll accost her. Do you amuse the old woman, while I endeavour to get from her, who, and what she is.

Chris. And so, I must make the old hen cluck, while you inveigle the young pullet!

Lor. What ! not in friendship, Don ?

Chris. Well, well—you know that way I'm your slave.

Enter ANTONIA and LEONELLA.

[They approach them ceremoniously.]

Lor. Well, Signora, what do you think of our renowned Preacher ? the triumphant Orator ! the Man of Holiness as he is styled !

Ant. He surpasses all my expectations. His eloquence sunk deeply in my heart. The very sound of his voice affected me in a manner I cannot describe—though never heard before, it did not seem strange to me—it pierced my very soul, and commanded my affection as well as reverence.

Lor. What think you of his countenance ?

Ant. It is of the first order of manly beauty : yet the searching severity of his eye, whilst it announces the keenness of his scrutiny, warns you of the terror of his rebuke. His is the front of purity, and vice must be abash'd before it.

Lor. See ! He is returning to his monastery.

[The organ plays a fugue, while Aurelio, preceded by boys with incense, and followed by the Fathers of his Monastery, walks from the top of the stage down, and quits the cathedral, making signs of his benediction upon the people.]

Leon. Well, for my part, I wonder what can

make people take such delight in gazing after him! Mercy upon me, I did but give a peep up, as it were, at his face, and he frowned so sternly upon me, that I tremble every joint of me.

Chris. O, 'tis very distressing indeed, to be measured in that way by a large bright, black, piercing eye, reading all that we meant should lie hidden in the bottom of that sacred well, one's own conscience.

Ant. With what humility, yet, at the same time, with what dignity did he retire from our admiring veneration!

Leon. Dignity! Why he is doubtless a person of quality.

Chris. Ah, Signora, one may see how thoroughly you observe mankind! What wisdom! what experience, you manifest!

Leon. O, Saint Barbara! You are too polite, Signor. [*Christoval draws Leonella a little aside.*]

Lor. Without absolutely saying so, the chance, I confess, is, that he had no noble origin. Report says, that, while a child, he was observed by some of the Monks among a gang of gypsies, who begged constantly at the Abbey-gates, and who, noticing his quick parts, took him into the Monastery—there, at the proper age, he made his profession.

Ant. What is mentioned of his conduct?

Lor. That his mortification and penance have
been

been extreme. Sensible of no imperfections in himself, his severity to others is unbounded. This would be thought blameable ; but he tempers the austerity of his religion with so much generosity of sentiment, his charity is so large, and his judgment so enlightened, that he is become the idol, as well as the wonder of all ranks throughout Madrid.

Ant. I regret that my retirement in Murcia kept me so long from the knowledge of your city's chief ornament.

Lor. Do you intend to stay long here? If you will allow myself, (Don Lorenzo) or Don Christoval, my friend, to use our influence for your service, I believe you will find that the attention we shall be proud of may not be unworthy of your acceptance.

[Christoval and Leonella advance.]

Leon. Never tell me, Signor. His time is not yet come. Averse to the sex ! Let me see such a man insensible to charms he might meet with ! Let me find beauty in tears (and that's always irresistible) confessing at his feet, (for Heaven knows we have all of us some peccadillos upon our consciences,) and then, what becomes of his apathy ?

Chrif. Why indeed, Madam, if you were thus before him :—

Leon. I vow, Signor Cavalier, you are the politest, finest gentleman !

[*They retire.*]

[*Antonia and Lorenzo advance.*]

Ant. I know not why I should resist your curiosity, and, though a stranger to me, I feel no repugnance to gratify it. I am the niece of the late Duke de Medina. My birth cost my mother her life. My father did not long survive her. The Duke, my uncle, received us: but he is lately dead too; and a very distant branch of the family has succeeded to the title and domains. Upon coming to take possession, he unfeelingly cast us out, with no other means, than what the few jewels I could call my own might produce. O, had my brother lived!—

Leon. Yes, Signor, she tells you truth. The dear child's dependance is now solely upon me,—unless his Majesty is graciously pleased to order the selfish Don Pedro to make her a suitable allowance, or, if that cannot be done, render her indebted for independance to his own royal bounty.

Chris. How long has your brother been dead?

Ant. I never knew him:—he died ere I was born—at least he died to us—for in his infancy he was lost; and all the search that could be made was ineffectual—nor have the faintest tidings of him reach'd us since.

Ler. May I hope you will allow me to second your application to the King?—My family is possess'd

sefs'd of some influence.—Permit me to wait upon you where I may learn more fully—

Ant. That I must absolutely forbid. As you would retain my favourable opinion, here we must take leave.

Leon. (to *Chris.*) Well, I will not refuse my hand.

[*Chris. kisses her hand, and Leon. and Ant. exeunt.*]

Lor. Loveliest of your sex, farewell !

Chris. Don Lorenzo !

Lor. What say'st thou, Christoval ?

Chris. I beseech you provide yourself with a new friend. Flesh and blood can't bear the service you put me upon. I am going to the drug-gift's.

Lor. Why, man, why ?

Chris. To buy hemony, to be sure. A full pound of myrrh, cinnamon, and aloes, would not sweeten my imagination.

Lor. Her eyes did seem two stars new shot from heav'n,
The messengers of blessedness to man !

Chris. Nay, we had eyes that shot too, and very furiously. Their squint kept me up a kind of a cross-fire, like the two salient angles of a bastion ; 'twas death to come between 'em.

Enter

Enter RAYMOND.

Lor. Don Christoval, look yonder at that man,
Close-muffled in his cloak—just by the pillar.
He's lurking for some mischief here, I doubt.

Chris. I'm sure of it. Ah! well-said, Signor
Shadow!

See, how he drops a letter at the foot
Of old cold stone St. Francis, hard as marble
Can make him 'gainst a lover's rhapsodies:

Lor. And now he plants himself behind the
column,
To watch th' event. But look, what's this ap-
proaching?

Chris. The fine old hen St. Clare, and all her
chickens—
Some of 'em game; my life upon it.

Enter the PRIORESS *followed by* NUNS.

CHORUS.

“Mark! how the sacred calm, that breathes
“around,

“Bids every fierce tumultuous passion cease!”

[*Agnes, in the procession, drops her rosary at the foot
of the Statue; and stooping takes up the letter.*]

Lor. By hell, my sister Agnes.

[*Raymond goes out satisfied.*]

Nay, nay, my Spaniard, you shall not escape me.

[*Rushes after with Christoval.*]

[The second stanza of the Chorus taken up by the Nuns. The procession moves on, and the scene closes as they are singing.]

CHORUS.

"In still small accents whispering from the
"ground

"A grateful earnest of eternal peace." [Exeunt.

SCENE II.—A Street before the Cathedral.

RAYMOND enters hastily, followed by LORENZO and

CRISTOVAL.

Lor. Stay, Signor Lurker!

And tell me what clandestine correspondence
You carry on with this chaste sisterhood?

Ray. That voice! Lorenzo, is it you, my
friend?

Well met—I could not hope for this encounter;
Yet willingly refer me to your justice.

Say, is not that Don Christoval?

Chris. The same. Come here in search of
my sister Miranda. I could have wish'd myself
better employment, than hunting after a capricious
woman.

Ray. Lorenzo, you are prepossess'd, I see.
Go to my lodgings: there I will detail,
As truly as I do my sins to Heav'n,
All that has pass'd between me and your sister.

C

Lor.

Lor. Take heed, Don Raymond! By my life I
swear,

If any indirect and treacherous means
Have warp'd my sister Agnes from her duty,—

Ray. You shall behold my very secret soul;
And must be satisfied.

Chris. We will be satisfied.

Lor. Come then.—Don Raymond!—but you
shall have hearing. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*The Cell of AURELIO.*

Enter AURELIO—the Fathers HILARIO and BONAVENTURE attending him.

Aur. Brethren, I thank you. Yet, while lowly
bending

For courtesy so gratifying,—let me
Be just to your most exemplary virtues:—
Under the soft'ring dew of holiness,
If I have yielded worthy fruits of piety,
Be all the praise to you, and to your order.

Hil. We bless the hour, when the especial love
Of favouring Heaven gave you to our charge.

Bon. Be yours the glory, that we boast a man
Whom vice could never warp.

Hil. Be all your meditations, visions, pray'rs,
Propitious as your eloquence. [*Exeunt Monks.*

Aur. Farewell.

Yes, here indeed I triumph! here indulge

The

The pride of mastering the human mind.
 It is my pride, to write upon the heart
 The words of truth in characters of fire.
 O sacred pledge of unpolluted life!
 Earnest, that abstinence from vain delights,
 Passions subdu'd and sacrific'd to duty,
 Are sanctify'd, and minister to Heav'n.
 And yet—am I indeed secure from frailty?
 A man—whose very nature leads to error:
 Here, in retirement, that I liv'd unstain'd
 Is scarce a wonder.—Summon'd to the world,
 Courted by wealth and power, and wit, and—
 beauty,—

How will Aurelio stand the tempting siege?
 May not the mounds of abstinence give way,
 And nature's passions, like a flood, o'erwhelm me?

[*A knocking heard.*]

Who knocks there?

[*Eugenio without.*]

Eug. 'Tis Eugenio.

Aur. Enter, son.

Enter EUGENIO, with a basket of flowers.

Eug. Most holy Father, pardon this intrusion.
 I have a friend lies dangerously sick,
 And would entreat your pray'rs in his behalf.
 To piety like yours Heav'n will be bounteous.

Aur. I will remember him at morn and eve,
 And in the solemn hour, when midnight calls

The brotherhood to their most awful duties,
Your poor sick friend shall never be forgotten.
What have you in your basket, kind Eugenio?

Eug. Some of those flow'rs, which most, I think,
you love.

Let me arrange them, Father, in your cell.

[*He does so.*]

Aur. There's something strangely winning in this
boy :

These simple acts of friendship from him charm me.
Great benefits flow rarely through the world :
But calm attentions, like a gentle wind,
Waft our frail vessel down the stream of time,
In one unruffled, even, steady voyage,
Till we are harbour'd in eternity.

[*To Eugenio.*]

I saw you not at church this morning, son.

Eug. Yet I was present, Father. Grateful as I
am

For your protection, counsel, nay esteem,
Ah ! could I fail, to witness all your triumph ?

Aur. My triumph ! O, my son, how vain a
thought !

The pow'r was Heav'n's—to Heav'n be all the
glory !——

Then you were satisfied with my discourse ?

Eug. How say you, satisfy'd ! O never heard I
Such eloquence, save once—save only once.

Aur. When was that once, Eugenio ?

Eug.

Eug. When you preach'd
On the late Abbot's sudden malady:

Aur. And were you present when I knew you
not?

Eug. Ah! had I perish'd, ere I saw that day,
What endless sufferings had my youth escap'd!

Aur. How! Sufferings at your age, my son!

Eug. Yes, sufferings,
Which known would raise your anger and your
pity—

The torment and the transport of my being.
Yet here I hop'd my bosom would feel tranquil,
But apprehension tortures me ev'n here.

O God, how wretched is a life of fear!

In the noviciate I have enter'd on

I've giv'n up all the world, and its delights;

Your friendship is the only blessing left me.

If I lose that—O, if I lose that, Father,

I tremble for th' effects of my despair.

Aur. You apprehend the loss of my esteem!

Be comforted; it is no transient sentiment,

Lightly bestowed, capriciously resum'd,

'Tis merit only claims, and will preserve it.

But for your sufferings, let that friendship teach you,

To trust me with their cause, and if relief

Be in my power—

Eug. 'Tis in no power but yours.

Yet, ah! you must not know them—Did I dare

Avow them to you, you would hate and loath me,

Drive

Drive me with ignominy from your sight,
And give me to the scorn of all mankind.

Aur. Impossible, my son. Let me entreat you.

Eug. I cannot—dare not—Ah, enquire no further!
[*Exit in great emotion.*]

Aur. [*after a pause.*] Myfterious youth! Within
two little months

How deeply is he rooted in my heart!

His voice affects me ev'n to melancholy!

His manners are the gentlest fure on earth!

As far as his retiring modesty

Allows the eye to note his lineaments,

His features seem of female loveliness! [*Bell rings.*]

But hark!—I must prepare me to attend

The Sisters of St. Clare in the Confessional.—

That duty done, my dearest care will be

To win the confidence of this poor boy,

And heal, or share, the sorrows of his breast. [*Exit.*]

END OF ACT I.

ACT

A C T II.

SCENE I.—*The Convent.*

AURELIO *sitting in the Confessional Chair.* AGNES
kneeling, as at Confession.

Aurelio.

ARISE, my daughter, purified from error.
Offences light as these find easy pardon.

[*Agnes in rising drops a letter from her bosom. It falls at the Abbot's feet.*]

Stay, Agnes, you have dropt a paper.

Agn. Ah! [*Turns suddenly round, and flies to regain it.*]

Aur. Hold! I must read this letter.

Agn. Then I'm lost.

Aur. [*Reads*]. "Dearest Agnes, all is ready
" for your escape. I tremble every moment
" lest your situation be observ'd by your com-
" panions. Immediate flight can alone save you
" from shame and punishment. At the garden
" door, to-night by twelve, I will be ready to
" receive you."

This letter, girl, must to the Prioress. [*Going.*]

Agn. Yet I conjure you, stay. O holy Sir,

With

With pity view the error of my youth ;
 Conceal the guilty weakness of a wretch !
 Here, at your feet, and bathing them with tears,
 I supplicate for mercy. Hide my fault ;
 Let not the hand of scorn write shame upon me.
 And here I vow, be angels witnesses for me,
 To pass my rest of life in expiation.

Aur. Amazing confidence ! Shall folly stain
 The virgin-tended altar of St. Clare ?
 And shall we cherish foul incontinence ?

Agn. O treat me not so harshly. Think, I
 charge you,
 Of that oppression, which a daughter suffers,
 When buried by her parents from the world,
 From social joy, from friendship, and from love !
 O shield my character from infamy ;
 Restore my soul to virtue and to Heav'n !

Aur. You have profan'd the sacred veil ; and
 can you
 Conceive yourself entitled to forgiveness ?
 I must have way. Where is the Prioress ?

Agn. Deem me not harden'd in unseemly passion.
 Long ere compulsion forc'd me to these walls,
 The partner of my fault possess'd my heart.
 Accident only let me know he liv'd.
 Could I refuse to meet whom I ador'd ?
 Till often mingling tears and stol'n embraces,
 Caution was lost—he press'd, and ruin found me.

A DRAMA.

17

Feel for my state, about to be a mother ;
Restore the letter ! Save me from destruction !

Aur. This is to add audacity to guilt.

Mother, St. Agatha, I say. [*She catches his robe.*]

Agn. O Father,

Think of the innocent I nourish in me,

Living, unconscious of my agony.

O, do not lay its nursery in the dust,

And make its cradle in its mother's grave !

Aur. I must not hear you. Where's the Prioress ?

Agn. O cruel, cruel—Mercy ! Heav'n sustain me ! [*She sinks to the ground.*]

Enter the PRIORESS and NUNS.

Aur. How shall I speak ?—Peruse that impious letter,

Dropt by the Sister Agnes at confession.

Agn. [*Starting up.*] Hear me, thou man of sternness, hard, obdurate !

You could have sav'd my honour from contempt,
Have giv'n my days to peace and penitence.

Arrogant confidence in your own strength
Makes you reject the contrite sinner's prayer,
Makes you disdain a mother's agonies,

And therefore on your conscience and your soul
I lay the death of me and of my child.

Aur. Forbear these ravings—Sisters, take her hence ! [*They seize her.*]

D

Agn.

Agn. No : in the pangs of death I would be heard. [*She bursts from them.*]
 What trials has your boasted virtue vanquish'd ?
 You fled them, like a coward, unattempted.
 But mark ! the hour of proof must come to all.—
 If in that hour you feel, that man is weak ;
 While shudd'ring you look back on your own crimes,
 O then remember Agnes and her faults !
 May yours compar'd plant horror in your heart !
 Remember Agnes then,—nor hope for mercy,
 But die the frantic victim of despair.

Aur. Haste to the convent with her—Let her penance
 Be strict ; and striking terror by its nature !
 Should guilt like this experience mitigation,
 The place of holiness will be a seat
 For loath'd intemperance.—Away with her.

Agn. O grant me, Heav'n, the mercy they deny me. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE, *the Garden of AURELIO's Monastery.*
A rustic Hermitage on one side. The Abbey in the distance.

Enter EUGENIO.

Eug. O miserable state, wretched Miranda !
 O fruitless stratagem ! Was it for this
 I left friends, fortune, family, and honour ?

My

My irresistible and fatal love
 Will force its way through all this vain disguise.
 Yet how reveal it to him?—How support
 The lightnings of his anger?—My weak spirits
 Shrink from the thought, and my chill'd heart dies
 in me. [*Sinks down upon the seat in dejection.*]

AURELIO enters unseeing and unseen.

Aur. However painful, I have executed
 The task impos'd upon me by my office.
 Penance and meditation may perhaps
 Preserve the fallen Agnes from perdition.
 I've done my duty! Why then do I feel
 As if my conduct merited reproach,
 As though beyond the size of the offence?
 Would I could banish this solicitude!
 In this sequester'd spot I may regain
 My wonted firmness and tranquillity.

[*Seeing Eugenio, he draws back.*]

Eug. [*Surveying the inscriptions.*] My heart re-
 fuses to admit the truth.
 No; Solitude supplies no balm to me,
 O could I feel disgust at all mankind;
 Did scorn, injustice, treachery, combine
 To plant the sullen fiend Misanthropy
 Within this breast, how happy might I be!

Aur. Seek in misanthropy for happiness!
 That's a strange thought, Eugenio, pardon me.

One so young too to wish for solitude,
And animate its bower with hate alone !

Eug. 'Twas a vain wish, I own, most holy Father,
Yet gives my only hope of earthly comfort.

Aur. Alas, Eugenio, churlish solitude
Is seldom the abode of peace or virtue.
While rankling hate inflames the mental wound,
The wretch who flies from men may think him
happy ;

May bless the hour, that tore him from the scene
Of broken hopes and violated vows.
But time still dries the tear on sorrow's cheek,
And injuries forgot are half aton'd.

Eug. Yet tell me, Father, when his worldly
pangs
Corrode and vex his chasten'd heart no more,
Then does not virtue smile upon his bower,
And fold him in her friendly arms to rest ?

Aur. No ! These are visions of the social man.
The hermit views a melancholy waste
Where'er he strays ; pores on the setting sun
With vacant eyes ; and when the falling dews
Drive him from gloomy, fruitless contemplation,
His cell is void of all the joys of home :
His lonely meal nor satisfies nor cheers :
But on his sinking heart sits blank despair,
Bids him forsake the tasteless food he loaths,
And be a solitary wretch no longer.

Eug. O that I ne'er had seen this Abbey's walls !

Aur.

Aur. Eugenio, whence this change, my tender friend?

What! can you wish that you had never known me?

Eug. You, you! Ah no—Yet, Father, pity me! Indulge this loneliness! The crowded world Can give none willing to partake my sorrows.

Aur. At least confide them to my friendly trust;

And if my aid, my pity can alleviate—

Eug. Yours only can. And oh! how willingly Would I reveal my heavy hoard of anguish, But that I fear—

Aur. What should you fear, my son?

Eug. My weakness known would lose me your esteem;

You would abhor me for the confidence.

Aur. Abhor you! No—It is not in my power! You give the greatest pleasure to my life: Reveal then your affliction, while I swear—

Eug. Yes, swear, that, be my secret what it may, You will not force me to forsake the Abbey.

Aur. I promise it, my friend, by all that's holy. And now explain, and trust to my indulgence.

Eug. Hear then with pity, hear, rever'd Aurelio, And call up ev'ry latent weakness in you, To aid that pity, while my desperate passion Bids me confess your suppliant is—Miranda!

[Throws back her cowl.]

Aur.

Aur. [*after a pause.*] Begone, or let me leave you.

Mir. Stay, I charge you.

Heav'n ne'er inspir'd a purer flame than mine,

Listen in mercy!

Aur. Can you nourish hope

I may permit your residence with me?

Ha! whence these tumults beating in my heart?

[*Aside.*]

Think of the violation of my order!

Nor dare I yield myself to such temptation.

Mir. O listen to me, most ador'd Aurelio!

Grant me the blessing only to be near you:

Keep my sex secret: nay, forget it quite;

For my affection—hear me!—is so pure,

So far sublim'd from ev'ry frailer thought,

That seraphs burn not with a holier fire.

Aur. To-morrow you must leave the Monastery.

Mir. And will you banish your poor friend for ever?

And will you drive her out a wanderer?

Rend the poor heart that only beats for you,

And spurn me to an undeserved grave?

O do not, my Aurelio!

Aur. Sweet Miranda,

I pity you—but am not to be mov'd.

To-morrow you must leave these walls for ever.

[*Going.*]

Mir. Did you not swear?

Aur.

Aur. You know my resolutions
You sue in vain.

Mir. Go then, barbarian, go.
But this resource you cannot rob me of.
[Draws a dagger.]

Shall I endure the keen reproach of friends,
The vulgar scoff, or, what is worse, the pity?
No: never will I quit these walls alive.

Aur. Hold, hold—most lovely, most unhappy
woman!

Mir. You are determined, Father: so am I.
The moment that you leave me, here I swear
To finish life and misery together.
Or your lov'd hand shall lead me on to joy—
Or my sure means conduct me to perdition.

Aur. Stay; thou delightful, beautiful mischief
—stay!
Yes, stay, Miranda, though for my destruction!
[Exit.]

Mir. My heav'n is won. My triumph is complete:
Love lights his torch of bliss, and burns in rap-
ture. [Exit.]

SCENE, *the Garden Gate of the Convent.*

The PRIORESS and Sister TERESA.

Prio. The hour draws on. How left you the
weak, wicked one?

Ter. In agony so violent, as to produce the in-
fant witness of her guilt.

Prio. Holy St. Clare! I who have passed my
life

life in the most mortifying denial, to build my Convent a reputation, to be sham'd at these years—and before Aurelio too, of all the world—the man whose praise would make the fortune of any Domina in Spain!

Ter. Has my holy mother determin'd on her punishment?

Prio. 'Tis likely her extremity may spare me that task—If she recovers, woe be to the harlot! In the mean time, Teresa, let no one have access to her cell. Give out she died this evening.

Ter. Yet consider: She is of a noble family. Do you think no search will be made what becomes of her? If they credit her death, will they not expect her funeral to be public?

Prio. Doubtless: that can be easily arranged. You shall be acquainted with all my plan ere we retire to rest. Now seek out Pedro, the gardener, and give him instructions what he must answer to any enquiry. I'll again to Agnes. [*Exit.*]

Ter. Pedro, where are you? Pedro, I say. O here he comes.

Enter PEDRO.

Pedro, Here, here, my sweet saint. What commands have you for Pedro? By St. Antony, my afternoon devotion has stretched plaguily into evening service. Your Malaga is a very dry wine. I'm rather dry myself—It suits my palate exactly.

Ter. Pedro, our lady has detected a most shameless piece of villainy.

Pedro. [*Aside*] O Lord, what's in the wind now?
I'm sober in a moment.

Ter. The Sister Agnes—

Pedro. [*Aside*] Pray heaven they don't suspect me
to be in the plot!

Ter. Has been detected in an amour.

Pedro. [*Aside*] Yes, and I shall be detected too,
if I don't get her off.

Ter. The appointment to go off with her be-
trayer this night has fallen into our hands.

Pedro. [*Aside*] Don Raymond will be here in a
moment,—and then I'm ruined.

Ter. In her condition, no wonder at the effect
of such a discovery! She expired in child-birth
this evening.

Pedro. Sweet creature! [*Aside*] O, don't men-
tion such shocking offences to me. [*Pushing her
off.*]

Ter. If any enquiry should be made after her,
you now know what to answer. [*Exit.*]

Pedro. Aye, aye. Detected, dead, her infant
too perhaps! How shall I meet Don Raymond?
how stab him to the heart, when it beats high
with the hope of clasping in his arms all that is
dearest to him? Poor gentleman! By Teresa's
silence on that head, they don't know him.—O, if
they find him out, their fury at the disgrace of the
Convent will send him speedily to the Inquisition,
Thank Heaven, they don't suspect me! If they

E

did,

did, they might torture me, but they should never make me treacherous. It's about the time. I'll see that they have actually retired. [*Enters the garden.*]

Enter RAYMOND and LORENZO.

Ray. I wonder Pedro is not here on guard.
If his attendance now should be prevented,
We have the cords, and scale the garden walls.

Lor. It wants a trifle only of the hour.

PEDRO returns.

Pedro. They are retired. All's safe. The gates are clos'd.

O yonder sure they are. I'll give the word.
But how reveal the tale? "'Tis almost twelve."

[*Aloud.*]

Ray. He gives the word! How my heart dances in me!

Pedro, my friend—Where is my beauteous Agnes?
Is she not ready? Nothing has occur'd
To stop her flight!

Pedro. Who is that with you, Signor?

Ray. My noble friend her brother, whose full heart

O'erflows with fondness for her: and he comes
To end captivity and doubt together,
To give her to her Raymond. Why this shyness?
Come forth, my Agnes, now while none observe
us.

Lor.

Lor. [*advances*] Yes, my dear sister—'Tis Lorenzo's self,
That breaks the galling fetters of your bondage,
And gives you freely to the man you love.

Pedro. I cannot speak to him—my heart is stifled.
The poor, dear lady!

Ray. Pedro, speak, what mean you?
Why are you dumb? What mean your hands
thus clasp'd,

Your bended eyes, that seem to penetrate
The very earth rather than look on me?
Is not my Agnes safe? Are we discover'd?

Pedro. All that you fear is true. I cannot speak it;
Nor is it fit abrupt to strike your sense
With tidings that would murder as they fell.

Ray. Yet tell me all. She is detected!—Well—
I can bear that—We'll heal that trivial wound;
No scar of shame shall mark it to the world!
But she is well.

Pedro. [*to Lorenzo, drawing him aside.*] I am not
man enough.

Tell him,—(You are a scholar, and will wisely;
You are her brother, therefore will with feeling;)—
Tell him her agony at the detection
Brought on the crisis of a mother's pains,
And in the conflict she and all are lost.

[*Exit in great emotion.*]

Ray. The news that's fitter for a brother's ear
Than for a lover's, tells itself, untold.

Then she is dead? Your silence, my Lorenzo,
Is both my answer and my condemnation!
Reproaches me for a dear sister's death,
And bars the arrow conscience fixes here.
Sweet innocent! 'tis I, whose selfish love
Brought shame and death upon thee. Cursed
Raymond

Alone could blast the promise of thy life!

Lor. I cannot give thee what I want myself—
Besides, what comfort lies in words?—She's dead!
And you must mourn her loss as her adorer,
I as her brother—

Let us from this place!
And keep yourself conceal'd—You know the peril
That would attend on your discovery!—
My firmness staggers under this rude shock;
And calls for lonely thought, to nerve my mind!
Come, my more wretched friend! My brother,
come.

[Leads him off.]

END OF ACT II.

ACT

A C T III.

SCENE, LEONELLA's House.

*Enter LEONELLA and ANTONIA.**Leonella.*

WELL, Niece, nothing of your professing Lorenzo! So passionate a lover, and so dilatory in his visits; but his coming at any time will make his peace. O, when I was in my teens, it was quite another affair. Such adoration! such assiduity!

Ant. There might be difference in the manner, dear Aunt, but the passion I fancy was always nearly the same.

Leo. Oh, nothing like it, Chuck. Lovers in my time were flung at such a distance—

Ant. I am afraid the distance was too great, Ma'am.

Ant. How too great, Child?

Ant. Why, ceremony kept the lovers so very far asunder, that some of the parties are never like to join issue.

Leo. Well, well, you never will become a convert to my doctrine, till you see the charming Don Christoval lead me to the altar.

Ant.

Ant. I fear that altar burns only the incense,
which fancy offers to the idol Vanity.

Leo. Aye, aye. Unbelief is blind. Mark the
event.

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. A young nobleman desires the honour to
kiss your hands.

Leo. Admit him. [*Exit Servant.*] My Christoval,
I know it by my palpitation.

Ant. I hope it is Lorenzo. How, Don Christoval!

Enter CHRISTOVAL.

Chr. Ladies, your slave. There's my dromedary. [*Aside.*]

Leo. I trust, Signor, you have enjoyed tolerable
health, since I last had the honour of your attendance.

Chr. Never better in my whole existence.

Leo. Nay, nay, not quite so well, I am sure.
Absence must chill the lover's heart; nor can its
purple streams e'er bound with joy, till she for
whom it beats restore their vital heat.

Chr. Where the devil is this Lorenzo? I shall
be ravished if he does not come to my rescue.
(Sblood, I'd sooner lay me in the fear-cloth with
an Egyptian mummy, than come within the clasp
of that hyæna.) [*Aside.*]

Ant. Poor woman! how ridiculous she makes
herself! I must step in to his relief. [*Aside.*]
—Signor

—Signor Don Christoval, when did you last see your friend Lorenzo?

Chr. Heaven bless you, Madam! He directed me to meet him here. The last time we parted, I left him robbing the church.

Ant. Robbing the church!

Chr. Yes, Madam, of a Sister.

Ant. How, Sir! [*alarmed*] Are you in earnest, Signor?

Leo. To be sure he is, Child. O, the difference of men!

Chr. Yes, yes—But it is his own sister.

Ant. Oh!—I'm satisfied.

Leo. Explain yourself, Don Christoval.

Chr. The Sister Donna Agnes of St. Clare. He was about to extricate her from purgatory, and give her to the man of her heart, his friend, Don Raymond. Not finding him here, ladies, and being anxious to know his success, I humbly take my leave, and wish upon you all the felicity that your best desires could fancy, and so, ladies—
[*Edging off.*]

Leo. What, and have you hired out to him all your sweet things for the day? Nothing to offer on your own account? Are all those charms which you admired so much, the ardour that you owned, the pangs you felt forgotten? Vows too poured out even at church! And was I treated only like a child—a May game—made a queen o'the May,
and

and stuck out in all the flowers of speech for a holiday foolery? [*Follows him about.*]

Chr. Hear me, dear, good, old lady, hear me. How was it possible you should think me serious? Friendship leads a man into dreadful situations. Let me escape but this once, and if ever I am caught mumbling withered apples instead of seasonable fruit, may matrimony harpoon me! May I be bound like whalebone to the back of a grannum of eighty, leave off swanskin, and warm myself with a leathern doublet! [*Exit.*]

Leo. O, the monster! The cruel, barbarous, perfidious, dear, handsome deluder!—But I'll forget all that. I shall go distracted with my wrongs. Such a face, that looked all sincerity! Such a tongue too, that might deceive a saint!—I feel it at my heart. O, I shall never recover it.

Ant. Come, come, Aunt—Revenge his infidelity on the whole sex. Disclaim all communion with these betrayers.

Leo. I will, Antonia. Never, though they were dying at my feet—No, not all their protestations, their despair, their death—I shall go distracted.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE, AURELIO's Cell.

Enter AURELIO.

Aur. In vain I strive to lull these thoughts to rest;—

Since Passion grew an inmate of my soul,

Ima-

Imagination stung can rest no more.
 Can Nature's impulse be unholy fire?
 Yet what is virtue, but surmounted passion?
 Would I had never climb'd this giddy height,
 This pyramid of earthly vanity!
 Each mounting step is less and less secure;
 And when we reach the summit of the spire,
 The very eminence disturbs the brain,
 And down we fall, the scoff of humbler fools.

MIRANDA *without*.

Mir. Are you within, good Father?

Aur. Come in. O how that gentle voice thrills
 through me!

Mir. [*entering*] Are you alone, Aurelio?

Aur. Alone!—Most true!

Guilt is of dark soul, and loves privacy.

Mir. Unkind Aurelio, thus to brand as crime
 A passion your own excellence inspires!

Aur. Thou dear deluder,—give me back my
 self.

Talk not to me of excellence and virtue,
 I never had them—or, if once call'd mine,
 Thy conqu'ring beauty drove them from my breast,
 And fill'd it with a love I should disclaim.

Mir. When purity like yours embraces love,
 It chastens it from ev'ry touch of grossness,
 And makes it but the wish of soul for soul.

F

Aur.

Aur. Enchanting accents!—but believ'd no longer.

Imperious passion scorns the frozen bounds
Of this refinement—I am new created.—
The fetters of monastic apathy
Are burst and shiver'd by resistless nature;—
The saint was all a dream—the man awakes.
How could I wish thee to forsake these walls!

Mir. What! was my very sight oppressive to thee?

Aur. Thou wonder of thy sex, in whom combine
All that can glad the eye, or charm the soul,
O, thou art born to conquer all resistance.
I see thee, angel as thou art in form,
Yet lovelier far than form alone could make thee!
Beauty is often but the painted snare
That lures the heedless eye to what is worthless—
Nature to thee has giv'n, to crown her work,
The mind, beyond the scope of vulgar being!
Intelligence she thron'd upon thy brow;
And sense and feeling do thee hourly homage.

Mir. O praise, too grateful from Aurelio's
tongue,

That, like a sudden gale of rich perfumes,
Hits the frail nerves too exquisitely keen,
And pains with its delight!

Aur. 'Tis destiny.

The dreams of purity immaculate,
That virgin'd me for years, are melted all

Like

Like the night shadows by the lord of day.
Take me, thou bright perfection, to thy arms!
Miranda, I am ever, ever thine.

[*A knocking at the door.*]

What noise was that? Retire, retire, Miranda,
Into my Oratory. Now I come. [*Exit Miranda.*]

Enter PEDRO.

What is your pleasure?

Pedro. [*Aside*] I thought I saw the hem of a petticoat.—Mercy upon us! Most holy Sir, the Prioress of St. Clare would trespass on your leisure and your counsel, if for a moment only you will grant it.

Aur. I shall expect her now, so tell your lady.
I wish'd to see her.

Pedro. I will, right reverend. [*Aside*] Yes, and I'll watch you closely too. Here's a hypocrite for you! Dooms the poor Agnes to destruction for one slip, while himself riots here in security!

Aur. Art thou not gone?

Pedro. The Prioress is here.

Enter PRIORESS.

And a pitiless pair there is of ye. [*Exit.*]

Aur. May peace and blessing ever rest upon you!
How does the sister Agnes?—Well, I hope.
Poor girl! I much desir'd to speak with you,
Touching the course to win her from her error.

Prio. Her failings and her merits are with Him
Who weighs us in the balance of his justice.

Aur. Most true: but something still remains
with us:

I mean—to draw the sliding back to safety,
Deduce a lesson from convicted evil,
Confirm the strong, and strengthen those that
tremble.

Prio. You lead me to the object of my visit.
If, holy Sir, you would but deign to treat
With eloquence like yours this foul offence,
This guilty love, that dares profane the altar,
The lesson would be written in all hearts.

Aur. Aurelio, art thou pure thyself from stain?
Is thy robe spotless?—[*Aside*]

Prio. Do not, Sir, deny me.
The interests of holiness are yours.

Aur. Sister, I yield with pleasure—but the sub-
ject
Seiz'd my attention on the instant hearing,
And wrapt me thus in thought.

[*A bell tolls.*]

Why tolls that bell?—

Pri. It summons us to give her to the earth.

Aur. Give her? Give whom?

Pri. I thought you understood me;
The sister Agnes,

Aur. Agnes! Is she dead?

Leave

Leave me this moment—leave me, I beseech
you!— [Exit *Priores*.]

I've sacrific'd to justice, too, too sternly.

Enter MIRANDA.

O impious rigour! O inhuman pride!

Mir. Be comforted—for holy was your purpose.

Aur. Talk not to me of purposes, Miranda—

What right has man to banish pity from him?

Do we not feel we live but by its influence?

And where's infallibility in me?

Do I not find me frail and vanquish'd also?

Should Heav'n judge me, as I have judg'd poor

Agnes,

What were my future portion but despair?

Mir. Let me keep peace between you and your
conscience.

Her punishment was love, though dress'd in terrors.

Its rigour tended but to bring her back,

More dear to Heav'n than had she never stray'd.

Designs once pure, events must rest above.

Aur. Poor frantic wretch! Her shrieks are in
my ears!

Her denunciations pierce my very brain!

"You have disdain'd to listen to compassion,

And therefore on your conscience and your soul

I lay the death of me and of my child."

Oh! thou poor lost one! all thy agonies

Are

Are visited upon my harden'd soul,
And terribly avenge the wrongs I did thee.

Mir. 'Tis horrible. Yet hear me, my Aurelio.

Aur. O come not near me. You, you make
my pangs

Too keen for me to bear—For, oh! in you
I see what Agnes saw, the mind's subduer:
Conscience arousd now tells me of my vows;
Tells me, I murder'd whom I match in guilt.
What canst thou say to dead the soul's quick
nerve,

And drive away Hell's ready slave, despair?

Mir. O do not bid me leave you! Drive
despair!

Yes, my Aurelio, love can chase that fiend—
It is the balm that heav'nly mercy made
To heal the wounded heart. A faithful breast
Is the soul's best physician—Trust its power.
Though in the mind the fiercest pangs increase,
Love lulls the pain, and smiles it into peace.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE, *the Prado.*

A gang of Gypsies enter with a fife and tabour, triangles, hand-organ, and other street music. ZINGARELLA suddenly stops.

Zin. We are at our journey's end. Yonder
stands the Monastery to which my father directed

us. But how to gain admittance to Aurelio is the question.

Claude. What business can the tribe of Geber have with his reverence, I wonder?

Zin. Listen attentively, and learn. You know how severely the late Duke de Medina persecuted our order.

Claude. Aye, aye, he filled our calendar with martyrs. The stocks, the whipping-post, and the town gaol never were so graced before.

Zin. My father resolved to take a severe revenge, and found means to steal away his nephew and heir apparent to the dukedom. The boy proved bright and apt, and the monks of that very monastery took him in, and that boy is now the famed Aurelio.

Claude. Indeed!—Aurelio!

Zin. Nothing more certain. And now we have discovered, that his sister and her aunt are come hither to solicit a pension. Lopez dogged them into the Grand Church.

Enter LOPEZ.

Lop. They are coming, they are coming. To your sleights, my dears. The young one is Antonia; the old woman, her aunt, Leonella. Strike up! and, Zingarella, prophesy.

Enter

Enter LEONELLA, ANTONIA, and a crowd of people.

Zingarella. [Sings.]

Cross my hand, and you shall know

All the Gypsy's art can show.

Would you have the past reveal'd,

Close by knavery conceal'd;

Would you know what blessings wait,

What ills annoy your future state;

Cross my hand, and you shall find

Destiny for once be kind.

[The crowd gather about them. LEONELLA and ANTONIA approach.]

Zin. [to Antonia] Bless you, sweet young lady!

May your fate be as gentle as your countenance!

Leo. Methinks you might learn respect, good stroller.

Zin. What, to age? Then most respectfully I turn to you. Would you choose a sample of my art? Give me your hand, and be attentive.

[Sings.]

Shrunk from splendour, let your state

Be respected, though not great.

Let not vanity engage

Your mind to trifle with your age.

All your flaunting days are over,

Never will you lure a lover:

For Ovid read some holy text;

Avoid this world, and seek the next.

Leo.

Leo. O, this is an impostor, I see. Come away, child. Don't listen to her impertinence.

Zin. Art thou too an enemy to truth? Stay, I charge you. It concerns you nearly. [*Sings.*]

What a various lot is thine!
Many a strange perplexing line
Through this palm with cutting strife
Mars the quiet of thy life.
When what is deem'd your greatest loss
Is the chief champion of the cross,—
Then wealth and power consent to join
A lover's noble hand to thine.

Ant. How singular was her address to me! I would fain despise it, and yet my mind is not sufficiently strong. Is it possible that—But no, the future must be hidden from all eyes.

Leo. A faucy vermin! Avoid this world, and seek the next, indeed! I hope I am not to take a Gypsy for my ghostly director. No lover neither, when the handsomest cavalier in all Spain is—O no—was dying for me at first sight!—O that my will could bring upon them all the plagues of their native Egypt!—But see, they are coming again!—Come, come. [*Exeunt.*]

CHORUS of Gypsies.

Cross her hand, &c.

END OF ACT III.

G

ACT

ACT IV.

Enter RAYMOND and LORENZO.

Raymond.

MY heart refuses me a place of rest !
I wander like some night-enlarged spirit,
Still loth to quit the earth, tho' all that gave
A shape, an aim, a colour to my being
Is sunk into the grave. May you be happier !

Lor. Time and my best Antonia may do
much.

But my dear sister's death sits heavy on me,
And I could sink beneath my own regrets,
Did not your still superior loss arouse me,
To mitigate the sufferings of a brother.

Ray. O my Lorenzo, horrors sore besiege me.
The day—the night, are fill'd with my despair !
All day I ponder on the heav'n I lost,
And night, like a perfidious flattering foe,
Gives me again poor Agnes to my arms ;
Makes me most rich in shadowy happiness,
Which the next dawning dissipates in air.

Lor. If comfort can be drawn from misery,
Calamity has fill'd your cup so full,

That you may smile at aught that threatens further.
And for these wild and feverish nightly dreams,—

Ray. Yet mark the circumstance that clothes my
visions.

Last night had worn away itself in thought,
And day already dimm'd my taper's flame,
When slumber clos'd my eye-lids. I was led,
Methought, by some one in a monkish garb,
Into an antique vault, a place of burial;
Where—side-by-side, the long-forgotten bones
Of faith's pure votaries lay fair-inscrib'd.
In the mid pathway of this ghostly hall
Sat one like sorrow's queen—Her throne the grave,
And the dull pillow on the which she lean'd,
Was a new shell of death untenanted.
The coffin-lid was off—I read its plate;
It told me that my Agnes rested there.
The seeming Monk then bade me look again:
The female form, that sat upon the ground,
Lifted her head, which till then droop'd to earth,
And call'd me by my name—But, O! that
voice!—

Lorenzo, 'twas your sister's—thine, my Agnes.
While from that coffin rose a cherub shape
Bright like an angel! Beams of glory burst
From his clear flesh, and such a smile effus'd
From his soft dewy eyes that I was dazzled
And fainting with delight. “Behold thy son,”

The friendly guide exclaim'd, "thy suffering wife,
Preserv'd and found, and giv'n thee from the
tomb!"

I flew to clasp them ; but the agony
Burst the frail thread of visionary action,
And I awoke.

Lor. Such are the shadowy trains,
Which fancy adds to double real griefs.

[*DON CHRISTOVAL without.*]

Cbr. What ho ! Where are you ? Let me speak
with you.

Lor. I hear Don Christoval. How ill his levity
Becomes a house like this !

Ray. Excuse me to him.
I have not yet composure fit to see him. [*Exit.*]

CHRISTOVAL running in.

Cbrif. She's alive ! She's alive ! Lorenzo, she
lives, and I am out of breath—I can't tell you
half. I should have burst my wind if it had not
been for my sword-belt.—But, thank Heaven,
she's alive.

Lor. Who—Who's alive ?—What idle stuff is
this ?

Cbr. Who's alive ? Why, who should be ?
Your sister Donna Agnes—I am sure of it ! I have
it under her own hand ! She writes me word so.

Lor.

Lor. Where? How! For Heaven's sake be explicit!

Chr. I haven't the paper. No matter—I read it. It dropt upon his head.

Lor. Whose head?

Chr. Upon Pedro's, I tell you. No wonder he has been crazy ever since. [*Searches again.*] Ha! ha! 'Ecod, here it is at last—I've squeezed it into a pellet in my hand. I've lamed my fingers with clenching it.

Lor. Let me undo it, man.

Chr. No—no—You're not cool enough. [*His hand shakes so, that he is long about it: and tears the letter a little.*] There—there—Not much torn—I can read it all by heart.

Lor. O, give it me. [*Snatches the letter.*]

Chr. Ha! this is idle stuff, is it?

Enter ANTONIA.

Ant. Don Christoval, your servant!

Chr. How do you do, Sir? [*Flies to her.*] You're an angel! I'll kneel to you, I have such news—My heart's broke with joy—but she's alive.

Lor. Look here, my dear Antonia, and bless Heaven!

Ant. [*Reads.*] "Pedro, my good friend, I
"conjure you, convey this to Don Christoval—
"You will hear that I am dead. My death is

"no

“no doubt designed—but it has not been the consequence of my agony.

“AGNES.”

Lor. Where, where is Pedro?

Chr. He's coming as fast as possible.

Lor. And you here so long before him?

Chr. How should he come so fast as I did? My heart's twice as big. He is a friendly assistant, and only runs: Love makes me a principal, and I flew. If you should hear of any body overturned—any old woman roll'd into the kennel—any chairs with glass beat out of the windows, and the chairmen rib-roasted with their own poles, set them all down to my account. My joy's worth a million times the damage. I'll pay it all tomorrow.

Enter PEDRO.

Here he is—Now then, my honest deliver—Tell us the manner how—the place where—the time when—all this news fell upon your weak penthouse?

Pedro. Aye, aye,—[Smiles—half-laughing, half-weeping, is unable to relate it.]

Lor. It was in the garden, friend?

Pedro. To be sure! Oh! all the Saints!

Lor. What day was this mock funeral then performed?

Pedro. Blessed be the day I was born!

Lor.

Lor. He does not understand me.

Pedro. St. Urfula, and St. Bridget ! St. Agatha !—No, I blot her from the martyr-roll.

Lor. My poor, dear fellow !

Pedro. [*Falling on his knees.*] He is merciful to us all.

Chr. 'Sblood ! He's bewitch'd !—Pedro !

Pedro. [*Crying.*] Aye, aye !

Chr. Zounds ! the fool's in hysterics ! Thus it is drink affects a soft head. The brain addles. The whole man becomes maudlin. This animal now is nothing but a gross pumpkin, all water : his head is dropfical—and grief has tapp'd him.

Lor. Let him compose himself below—We'll talk to him at a fit season.

Chr. You're a pretty fellow, indeed, to travel with good news. The heart of you isn't in fault, that's the truth on't. And as for this embassy by water to our comfort, it is but an April shower—the sun-shine of the soul beams through it in the brightest colours. 'Tis Heaven's own rainbow, the sign of compassion and love. [*Leads off Pedro.*]

Lor. The difficulty now will be to deliver her from this dreadful situation.

Ant. Some management will be necessary in its disclosure to Don Raymond.

CHRISTOVAL returning.

Chr. I have it—I am the man for difficulties.

Lor.

Lor. My dear, whimsical, faithful friend—
What device is there in thy brain that thou enjoy'st so mightily?

Cbr. Your sister must not be regain'd—No!—
that's certain—nobody will stir in her behalf—she
must be suffer'd to endure all the malignant tortures
of that hell-cat. *[Walking about.]*

Lor. No!—I will make my appeal to the spiritual powers.

Cbr. Heav'n help you—you'll need it.—No,
no—I'll deliver your sister—I—the maggot-pated,
idle, thoughtless chough, will do it. I apply to the
cannon law—and rescue the captive by military ordinance—
Trust to my genius, and be ready to aid me when I give the word.

Lor. Now let us seek Don Raymond.

Cbr. Be that your business. I have mightier
matters.—Courage—and march. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE, AURELIO's Cell.

MIRANDA enters, followed by AURELIO.

Mir. No more—It ill becomes your lips to
utter;

I feel myself dishonour'd to have heard
The plain avowal of illicit love.

Mark me, Aurelio: That my yielding soul
Was wholly yours, I glory to avow.

I made myself a love of character,

And

And bound my passion to your purity:
I knew my honour, and relied on yours.

Aur. : Yet do me justice, ev'n in your dislike
pleasure.
I could not hope, and early I confess'd it,
To be allow'd to gaze upon your beauty,
Indulge the knowledge of your answ'ring love,
And not approve temptation in the grant.
I yielded my consent.

Mir. To save my life!—
Your memory is perfect, Sir—But still
Those words must come from no one but myself.

Aur. Cruel Miranda!—could you think my
nature
Would e'er insult the object it adores?
If, in the hourly witness of those charms,
The fires they must excite will burst their way,
In spite of all the checks of my condition—

Mir. And what you gave in pity to my weakness,
You now would make the ruin of my fame!—
But if I thought I could be so degraded,
To fall a victim to impure desires,
I'd tear myself from thee, and all the world,
And burning shame should crumble me to ashes.

Aur. The passions Heav'n inspires, his love
permits.
His creatures all indulge them, and are happy,
Shall we alone disclaim the generous bliss,
And freeze the mighty fervour by caprice?

H

Mir.

AURELIO AND MIRANDA,

Mir. 'Tis true—the chain of love surrounds
creation,

And all the various tribes of being feel it :

To man exclusively the law is giv'n,

That binds his reason and his love together,

And bids him live for one—and one alone.

Aur. Hear me protest—that you, and only you,

Shall ever reign the sovereign of my heart !—

Silence your scruples then—Accept a pledge

Sacred as if recorded at the altar.

Comply, my gracious sweetness !—Who can know it ?

Mir. I shall. No, no ; these solemn-sounding
words

But veil the infamy that lurks beneath them,

They cannot change its colour.—Shall I speak it ?

It makes of you a cheat, tho' saint without :—

And, to describe the partner of your crime,

'Tis Nature's error, an immodest woman ;

A common character, but not Miranda's.

Aur. Perverse, mysterious sex !—proposing ever

Objects that mock all possible attainment.

Show them a being, who renounces love,

One covenanted to despise its power,

Him they pursue with all the rage of conquest,

And bend him to their will. The task achiev'd

Seems to annihilate the love which prompted it,

Or fences it with scruples never dreamt on.

Mir. Thus irritated passion ever clouds

The purposes that thwart its rash indulgence.

Hear

Hear me, and weigh the motives of my conduct,
And call me then capricious or unjust.
Fatally for my peace, a slave to love,
I fought, with innocence, its safe indulgence.
I saw Aurelio awful in his virtue ;—
But what repell'd the sex attracted me ;
Nor could I think the highest hopes of man
Rais'd him beyond the reach of woman's love.
I did aspire to make him own a wish,
And to supply that wish by virtuous passion ;
My house's power might have absolv'd his vows,
And bid his goodness blaze in social life ;—
I hop'd in him a husband.

Aur. O Miranda,
Affail not thus my falt'ring resolution !
Think, think, before you bid me leap the gulph,
To what a fearful depth your victim falls.
Where is the fame, to which I sacrific'd
The feeling idly deem'd beyond temptation ?
Can I go forth, and tell the scoffing world
My firm resolves are feeble as their own,
And bear the bitter taunt which waits on him,
Who dares a trial mightier than his strength ?

Mir. He, who does well in any rank of life,
May calmly brave the calumnies of men,
And boldly look to Heav'n for his reward.

Aur. Yes, there are duties, public and recluse,
Which to discharge is praise, howe'er we chuse ;
But when the choice is made, and bound for ever,

If the recluse return to what he left,
The world will say 'twas appetite alone,
Not his conviction, that produc'd the change,
And hold him an apostate and impostor.

Mir. No more, no more—I see where it must
end:—

Aurelio blushes at an act of virtue,
Because some misconstruction waits upon it;
And, therefore, he would have Miranda yield,—
To guilt, which no construction can excuse. [*Exit.*

Aur. 'Tis well.—Her scorn has giv'n me back
myself.—

My pride sustains me now. Aurelio, wake!—
Renounce the hope of those high dignities
Thou may'st aspire to! and for what? A woman!
But such a woman! How! relapsing—Slave!
Bondman to folly and vexation still?—
I will forget Miranda and her charms,—
Nay learn—if possible—to hate her.—Now,
Oh now, poor Agnes, I remember thee. [*Exit.*

SCENE, the Garden.

Enter MIRANDA—ZINGARELLA waiting behind.

Mir. The monastery must no more supply
A safe indulgence to my chaste affection!
He, whom I fancied rais'd above temptation,
Like the cold ice-alp, which the sun ne'er melts,
Descends to dally with unholy fires,

And

And tampers with his vow. Farewell, Aurelio!
 Yet I must leave my pity with thy fault,
 And rate my idle and romantic wish,
 That drew thy lonely virtues into peril.

[Exit Miranda.]

ZINGARELLA advances.

Zin. Aye, that's the lady Pedro told me of:
 and, by the description I have heard of her, she
 should be Miranda, the long lost sister of Don
 Christoval. [Sings.]

Turn thee, lady, lady sweet!

Listen to me, I entreat!

I've a tender tale to tell—

You will feel—who love so well.

Re-enter MIRANDA.

Mir. Ha! who is this, that seems to know my
 story?

Approach, me, child!—What wouldst thou say
 to me?

Zin. Pray pardon me, madam—but indeed I
 must interest you in the saddest story, that ever
 met your ear—and all who know the lady Miranda
 are sure that she will listen to the wretched.

Mir. How is it, that thou know'st me for
 Miranda?

Zin. O, madam, gypsy as I am, I have rela-
 tions in the church. The gardener of St. Clare's
 convent

convent is my own brother, and my old father is now endeavouring to procure speech with Aurelio.

Mir. Nay, then, we need not fear an interruption.

What is the story I am wish'd to hear?

Zin. You have heard, madam, of an unhappy nun, named Agnes?

Mir. I have—She perish'd by inhuman rigour.

Zin. So the good Abbot thinks, madam, I am sure. But did he know that she is yet living, and buried by the merciless Domina of the convent, to fall a victim to hunger, and her inexorable revenge, I am certain his pity would relieve the poor sufferer.

Mir. Agnes alive! Doubtless he would relieve her.

For O, he knows how frailty's dusky spots
Stick on the ermine of the whitest virtue, [*Aside.*
But where is she confin'd?—Say, has your brother
Suspicion of the place of her confinement?

Zin. He does not know for certain, madam. But it is thought, that those, who are condemn'd to expiate any great offences, are usually thrust down into a dungeon in the Cemetery.

Mir. The Cemetery!—As I recollect
It joins the Sepulchre, that appertains
To th' Abbey. Ha! a gleam of light breaks on
me!

Retire,

Retire, good tender girl.—I'll to the Abbot,
And interest him in her swift recovery.

[*Exit Zingarella.*]

I did not think to tarry here an hour—
But now there is a cause, which claims me wholly.
Shall not a woman feel a woman's sorrows?
There is a gate, that parts the neighbour graves—
O could I burst its bars, and save this Agnes!—
And why not? Pity's torch burns bright before me,
And lights me to the trial. Mercy lead me!

[*Exit.*]

SCENE, AURELIO's Cell.

Enter AURELIO and Old ZINGARO.

Old Zin. I knew your reverence would be deeply
mov'd

At this poor Nun's distress, and bless the chance
That gave me knowledge she was yet alive.

Aur. No: be assur'd I never meant her penance
Should fasten on her life; and will myself
Demand her from the cruel Agatha.

Old Zin. Thanks, thanks for that.—But I have
something more,

Which, while it lays my guilt before your mercy,
Calls louder yet for hearing from Aurelio.

But ere I tell my tale I must exact
Your sacred promise of forgiveness, Sir,
For all the injuries which I have done you.

Aur.

Aur. Injuries done,—and done by thee, poor man!—

But, be this wonder what it may reveal'd,
They cannot be too great for me to pardon.

Old Zin. You may have heard, that they receiv'd
you here

An orphan child——Ah! little did they think
That they then buried from his rank and splendor
The long-lost heir of De Medina's house.

Your father was a pillar of the state,
Grave, rigid, just,—let me say unrelenting.—
He persecuted our poor wandering tribe
With such severity, that pity wept.

But he forgot, the meanest may revenge;
And the low worm, that cannot reach the breast,
May strike its deadly venom in the heel.

Aur. Spare these reflections—On!—thy story:
briefly!

For, oh! it quickens in my springing soul,
Transports unutterable.

Old Zin. In resentment

I found a way to steal you from his palace;
Baffled all search to find his only son;
And having foster'd with my fittest means
The powers, that open'd in your infancy,
At length I yielded to the gen'ral wish
Of these good fathers, and you took the cowl.
Here I had left you, sunk and unregarded—
Had not the noble spark of merit in you

Flam'd out, and claim'd distinction.—When I
heard

From the remotest corner of our country,
The virtues of the excellent Aurelio,
His eloquence divine, his piety,
The miracles wrought by his life and doctrine,
Repentance came upon me. I am ready
With proof to vouch my tale. And now, my
fate!—

Whatever you decree, I bend submissive.

Aur. Take my forgiveness!—Take my blessing,
father

Of this my better birth. Thou dost not know
How ev'ry word thou'st utter'd glads my heart.
Prepare thy proofs, and meet me on the instant.

[*Exit Old Zin.*]

My birth declar'd, absolves me from my vows;
Returns me to the world,—and thee, Miranda.—
O, in one little hour, to be restor'd,
While tottering on the verge of guilt and horror,
To rank, and affluence, and spotless love!—
But, let me pay my gratitude to Heav'n,
Not in the empty sounds of wordy praise,
But in the deeds of mercy. Yes, poor Agnes!
I can now feel a sympathy severe
Impell me tow'rds thee—and I fly to save thee.

[*Exit.*]

END OF ACT IV.

I

ACT

A C T V.

SCENE I.—*The Grand Square in Madrid.*

Enter CHRISTOVAL, JUAN, *and Soldiers.*

He marches them round the Stage, and then addresses them.

Christoval.

BROTHER soldiers, I have but a few words to say to you; and to tell the truth, the occasion makes them look so like a speech, that I fear I shall stammer most cruelly. Yet I must explain myself, to benefit by your assistance.

Juan. Tell us but the object, and lead us to achieve it.

Chr. Then it is dearer to a soldier, friends, than even the laurels of his valour—it is a deed of mercy. Brothers, a woman, whose only crime is love, pines in a dungeon; shut with her infant from the freshening day-breeze. She was once, comrades, beauteous as summer, ere superstition bowed her lovely head, and grief wrought winter on it with her tears.—She is dear to me by every tie—Make my cause yours.

Juan. The cause is pity!—We love you, Captain, heartily—To obey you is a duty in all cases.

Chr.

Chr. Aye, and to feel for woman in distress, is a lesson, which nature wrote upon our hearts, when our first infant cries proclaim'd our wants, and found them answer'd by a mother's love.

Juan. O, no more, good Captain—Lead us to her rescue.

Chr. You speak like an angel—and fight, I know it, like a devil. Pardon me! I was for trying, whether I had not eloquence enough to mould you to my purpose—but a plague of long speeches! The true secret is, to fling your heart upon your lips. One sentence with feeling for its spirit, and virtue for its meaning, sets our nature in a blaze, and all the selfish part of it is blown up in a moment. Now then, my boys, march—and Heav'n bless you! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*A part of the Vaults of the Monastery.*

Enter MIRANDA.

Mir. This is the way, as well as I may judge. The dead, in orderly arranged files, Leave this uncumber'd path, to tempt me onwards.

O, let me find the intervening gate,
And my strong pity, mightier than my force,
Shall burst its brazen folds, though triple-cas'd.
Spirit of Sympathy! be thou my guide. [*Exit.*]

SCENE III.—*A Sepulchre.*

A cross, and a lamp burning before it.

AGNES *discovered, sitting upon the ground, leaning upon a coffin—the lid off, and by her side.*

Agn. How found he sleeps!—Poor infant, 'tis the same

To him this hideous nursery of horror;
This house of death too,—which, for me design'd,
Serves as a pallet-bed, to shroud his slumbers.
Could I be certain they would save my child,
I'd stretch me, patient, in my last abode,
And thankfully embrace eternal sleep.

[She sinks upon the coffin.

[A noise at the gate.]

What noise was that?—'Tis not the usual entrance,

Mir. *[without.]* Agnes!

Agn. My name!—and in a voice I know not!

Mir. *[without.]* Heav'n sends you a deliverer!

Rise! assist me!

Something secures the gate o'th' inner side.

Agn. Alas! I cannot—My enfeebled joints
Refuse to bear my cumbrous weight again,
And sink me down never to rise.

Mir. O strive—

So near deliverance!—Do but draw this bolt,
Which lies below the lock, and the gate opens,

Mir. So little to perform—and shall I fail?

Cap

Can I not drag me on the earth as far,
To bring my child to day-light?—For a moment,
Kind Providence, O string my slacken'd nerves!
One effort!—If I save him, I die happy.

[*She attains the door, and draws the bolt—but faints,
overpowered by the action.*]

MIRANDA forces open the gate, and enters.

Mir. Horrible cruelty!—Thou wretched mother,
Raise thy dejected head: and let the thought
Of promis'd life, and liberty, and love,
Aid thee, to further my weak powers to save thee!

Agn. [*reviving.*] Did I hear truly? Did some
friendly voice

Propose to save?—Look there!—O save my
child!—

And leave a sorrow-smitten wretch like me,
To bless your charity, and then expire.

Mir. Come, come—Nay, give not all so soon
for lost.

Rest yet a little, and we'll venture hence.

Agn. O my preserver!—I had impiously
Parted with confidence and hope together.

I see, no dungeon cruelty can dig,
Malice can fill, or innocence inhabit,
Is too profound and strait for dove-eyed mercy
To pierce with succour for the child of grief.

Mir. That power will guide us from this den of
horrors!

Let me consider—I must first convey
This tender pris'ner to a kindlier place,
And then return with help to bear you hence.

“She that e'er hopes to live to be a mother,
“Feels throbbing in her pure and virgin breast
“The sweet solicitude of trembling pity
“For helpless infancy”—Heav'n is smiling now,
And fostering, well pleas'd, a deed of mercy.

[Exit Miranda.]

Agn. Immortal power, preserve my child!—
She's gone.

Spirits of peace, O tranquillize my soul,
Or rapture will be deadly like despair.

[A noise, as of a trap-door heard on the other side.]

The PRIORESS is seen coming down with TERESA.

Ha! they approach—

Prio. Wretched Agnes,
Whom all the mercy I intended marks
But deeper with the brands of guilt and shame,—
Answer me, how hast thou divulg'd a secret,
Which I thought never could have pass'd these
walls?

Agn. No:—I will never implicate by weakness
One whose rash pity risk'd ev'n life to save me.

Prio. Trifle not with my vengeance, wanton—
Know,

In spite of all thy arts, it comes to crush thee.
Thou art to die—and this thy hour appointed.

Agn.

Agn. Ha! I'm lost!—

Prio. You have disgrac'd your order and your convent,

Publish'd your infamy, and our dishonour;

Therefore you die.—Behold! the means are ready.

Agn. Poison!—What, shall I aid my own perdition?

Prio. Take it—Be brief.

Agn. For your eternal welfare,
Let me but live an hour for preparation!

Prio. What! till the partner of your crime shall come

With sacrilege to snatch you from my grasp?

I know the whole of your plotted guilt.

No: now this moment!—Nay then!

[*Offers to strike.*]

AURELIO rushes in through the gate, followed by

HILARIO and BONAVENTURE.

Aur. Hold your hand!

Is this the way that leads to penitence?

These vaults of death, are they the holy means

By which the feeble are restor'd to goodness?

Merciless! horrible! Religion thus

Loses its sacred character and office;

Converts to bigot rage, and rends the heart

Its all-forgiving Author bids it heal.

Agn.

Agn. Thus—in the dust, I bless the pitying
hand,
Which bruise'd me in its justice but to save me.
[*A shout without.*]

CHRISTOVAL, RAYMOND, LORENZO, JUAN, and
Soldiers break in.

Ray. My life, my Agnes!—we will part no
more. [*Agnes faints.*]

Lor. O, my dear sister!

Aur. Bear hence those vile women.

[*Another shout without.*]

[*Exeunt Priores, Teresa, Hilario, and
Bonaventure.*]

Chris. Haste, reverend Aurelio, to the Con-
vent!

The people furiously assail the walls,
And nothing but your presence can restrain
them.

Aur. Be ready to resist them, if I fail!
Though there is virtue in their sympathy,
Yet violence is not the march of justice.
Where there are laws, the laws alone should punish.
[*Exeunt Aurelio, Juan, and Soldiers.*]

Ray. Lift up thy head, my Agnes—See, thy
brother.

But ah! I tremble to enquire—our child—

Enter

Enter MIRANDA.

Agn. He lives—is safe.

Ray. May I believe it true?

Mir. Yes, I preserv'd him—Nay, no thanks to me.

Whate'er my future lot, thus to have sav'd
One innocent, is transport to my soul—
A joy too bright for misery to cloud.

Agn. Where is the other saviour of my life,
Who snatch'd me from the dagger's point—Aurelio?

Mir. Did he? Aurelio!—Blessings, blessings on him!

Chris. And now, Lady Runaway, if you have done with your prayers, vouchsafe a word to Captain Christoval:—for, though a Nunnery is the last place I thought of finding you in, I believe you are my hopeful sister, Miranda.

Mir. Brother, you're not deceiv'd—'tis she herself;

Who, wild and visionary as she seems,
Feels for her Christoval the truest fondness.

Enter AURELIO, ZINGARO, ZINGARELLA, ANTONIA, &c.

Aur. Miranda here!—Thou mistress of my fate!

K

Why,

Why, I have news to tell thee, my Miranda,
 More strange than all the miracles before us.
 The secret of my noble birth reveal'd,
 Confirm'd by proofs too evident for doubt,
 Dispenses me from the monastic state;
 And might I hope you would accept my hand,—

Mir. Away reserve, and maidenly resentment!
 To be permitted to receive his vows,
 Whose sympathizing goodness has preserv'd
 Repentant Agnes to a happier life,—
 Thus virtuous, thus to call thee mine, Aurelio,
 Is bliss unutterable!—

Cbr. Is this the end
 Of all your wanderings, my gentle sister?

Ray. My Agnes, let me lead thee from this
 place.

Trust me, thy sufferings well shall be aton'd.

Aur. As heir to De Medina, all the pow'r
 That I have lies at your disposal, Sir.

Zin. Now, now, Antonia, is your time to speak.

Ant. One wonder yet remains—You said Me-
 dina—

If you are he, I kneel before my brother.

Aur. My happiness is more than I can bear.
 Please you, retire within the Abbey-walls,
 And so repose awhile. Events like these
 Fever the mind with its own best emotions.
 Miranda, come, my love, my mistress!—

With safety may I give me to the world,
While you direct me—my unerring guide !
Our passions are the fairest gifts of Heav'n !
Their just indulgence is our proper joy :
'Tis their perversion only makes us wretched.

THE END.

With faith may I give me to the world

LAUGH

Our passions are the fairest gifts of Heaven!

Their indulgence is our joy:

This then pervades only makes us wretched

TO LOVE AS YE

THE END

HESTER ROEAL, TOWN OF GARDEN

THE END

BY FREDERICK REYNOLDS

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THE END

24